DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 205 880 EC 133 347

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TITLE Special Education in a Multicultural/Pluralistic Society.
PUB DATE Feb 81
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at The Council for Exceptional Children Conference on The Exceptional Bilingual Child (New Orleans, LA, February, 1981, Session F-16).

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum; *Disabilities; Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Human Relations; *Models; *Multicultural Education; *Teacher Education

ABSTRACT

The model teacher special education program at Wright State University (Ohio) offers training in three human relations areas: a strong sense of self awareness and knowledge on one's own potential helping skills, a realistic idea of what tasks are involved in teaching, and a realistic awareness of the makeup of the multicultural/pluralistic school and the implications for teaching behaviors to serve in pluralistic schools. The "Learning Triangle" model (F. Hewett) identifies the three dimensions crucial to effective teaching and successful learning: the curriculum, consisting of instructional tasks, actitivies, and assignments; conditions, involving the circumstances and criteria established for successful attainment of the curriculum; and consequences, referring to the motivational factors and incentives employed to give the greatest probability that the instructional tasks will be accomplished under the specified conditions. All teacher education students complete modules which cover mainstreaming, meeting individual needs, classroom management, and teaching in a multicultural/pluralistic society. Among the specific objectives and enabling activities in Wright State's introductory module are review of concepts about different cultural, ethnic, religious, and economic groups; recognition of prejudice, scapegoating, and discrimination; and recognition of controversial issues. (SB)

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Special Education in a Multicultural/Pluralistic Society

Oris Amos and Michael Williams

School populations represent children of many races, economic levels, religions, and different physical and mental capacities. Teachers and other professionals must be able to teach (help) students who come to schools representing diverse backgrounds and abilities. The area of special education has dealt with the impact of the make-up of the multicultural/pluralistic society more than any other area in education. In the past, special education, especially classes for the educable mentally retarded (EMR) and emotionally handicapped (EH), became "overpopulated" by children who were poor, bilingual, culturally different, or severely frustrated with the school (Dunn 1968; Johnson 1969; Jones 1976; Mercer 1978). An overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in special classes helped to trigger the mandate for non-biased testing, placement in least restrictive environments, and individual education programs--all which are included in PL 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children's Act, 1975. Most teachers coming from generally middle class Anglo backgrounds have little or no preservice or inservice training in working with children whose cultural backgrounds are different from the Anglo background. Not only do teachers have little or no experiences or training in working with culturally different children, but books, materials, and curricula offerings continue to present America as a monolithic rather than a pluralistic society. Many schools continue to cling to the "melting pot" myth which did not materialize. America, and consequently the American school, is a "mosaic" array of many diverse groups of learners rather than a melting pot. Discussing the mainstreaming of Indian children and the mosaic theory, Floy Pepper (1976) has stated:

> The mosaic theory suggests that the ethnic groups can live side by side, keeping their own ways, traditions, and learnings, respecting themselves and others and accepting those differences as normal and natural. This concept is often referred to as "cultural pluralism" when applied to a community.

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There is an abundance of articles pointing up the need to develop teacher training programs which prepare teachers to work in a multicultural/pluralistic society. Reginald Jones, and Frank Wilderson (1976) point out the possible role of negative teacher attitudes and expectations in the disproportionate placement of minority students in classes for the mentally retarded. Jones and Wilderson (1976) further call for "conceptualizations, strategies, and techniques which will be useful to those who assess, teach, and evaluate minority children." Robert Fuchigami (1980) discussing "Teacher Education for Culturally Diverse Exceptional Students" summarized his concerns by stating:

> A major barrier is a teacher education program that fails to provide information and skills about how to work with minority students and their parents. In essence minority children must not be expected to carry the burden of teacher and administrator ignorance about minorities into the 1980s. Teacher trainers have an opportunity and a directive to make the necessary changes. The question remains: How will they respond?

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education has included in the standards for evaluation of teacher education programs, requirements for preparing teachers who can provide instruction in a multicultural society. In describing multicultural education, NCATE Standard G-2.1.1. (1977) states that multicultural education could include but not be limited to experiences which:

1. Promote analytical and evaluative abilities to confront issues such as participatory democracy, racism, sexism, and the parity of power;
2. develop skills for values clarifications;
e. examine the dynamics of diverse cultures, and the implications for developing teaching strategies and,
4. examine linguistic variations and diverse learning styles as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies.

New standards for teacher education in the State of Ohio require that the teacher education curriculum include human relations related to both teaching

in a pluralistic society and working effectively with students regardless of race, political affiliation, religion, age, sex, and socioeconomic status or exceptionality not requiring a fulltime special educational environment" (Standards for colleges or universities preparing Teachers, 1975).

Under PL 94-142, all children must receive a free public education in the least restrictive environmert. Under the law many mildly handicapped children will be remaining or returning to the regular classroom. Many of the minority children who in the past would have been labeled and placed in a special class will be educated by regular teachers. Therefore, all teachers--special and regular--must have training in working with culturally different exceptional children. Special education faculty can and should take some of the responsibility and leadership in helping to develop and monitor the multicultural teacher education curriculum. Special educators must mainstream themselves among their colleagues on college campuses--especially must special educators "integrate" themselves with general teacher educators. The Wright State University Special education faculty is mainstreamed, and has taken leadership in several areas of the redesign of the teacher education curriculum.

Wright State University's Program Model

When "rethinking" Wright State University's teacher education program, faculty from various disciplines, after heated debates and discussions, reached concensus upon some of the general areas which should be included in a teacher education program. Reviews of current literature on teacher effectiveness, mandates of PL 94-142, NCATE, and the current new standards for the State of Ohio helped to identify the areas to consider. The following were the broad areas selected to train teachers in the human relations, affective areas:

1. A strong sense of self-awareness and knowledge of ones own potential helping skills.

2. A realistic idea of what tasks are involved in teaching.
3. A realistic awareness of the make-up of the multicultural/pluralistic school and the implications for teaching behaviors to serve in pluralistic schools.

In multicultural education, self-awareness and awareness of the diversity in schools should be strong components of a teacher education program (Amos 1978; Combs, Avila and Purkey 1978; Gay 1978; Amos, Jones, Williams and Brooks 1980). Awareness is the first phase or introductory component of the WSU module on multicultural/pluralistic issues. Reinforcement is the second phase in which the preservice teachers research information about ethnic minorities, and share this information with peers. Interviews with ethnic group members, films, and other media support the readings and research. Students have opportunities to master certain concepts as they move through the teacher education program. Strands of the multicultural/pluralistic (MC/P) area, such as the need to understand and plan for individualization run throughout the program. The Wright State program is built upon the following schema:

Introduction and Awareness ⟶ reinforcement ⟶ mastery of key concepts

Any viable MC/P education conceptualization or approach must acknowledge, accept and respect all diversity within the human experiences, not merely those of a cultural or ethnic nature. The concept must include the "multicultural" aspect, relating to cultural and ethnic diversity as well as the "pluralistic" aspect, referring to an unlimited number of other possible types of diversity (e.g., sex, age, handicapping conditions, regionalism, social class, etc.). The MC/P program must provide a structure that makes available appropriate learning environments so that the academic and social needs of all students can be most effectively addressed. This point can be best illustrated by way of the "Learning Triangle" model presented by Hewett (1977) and recently elaborated

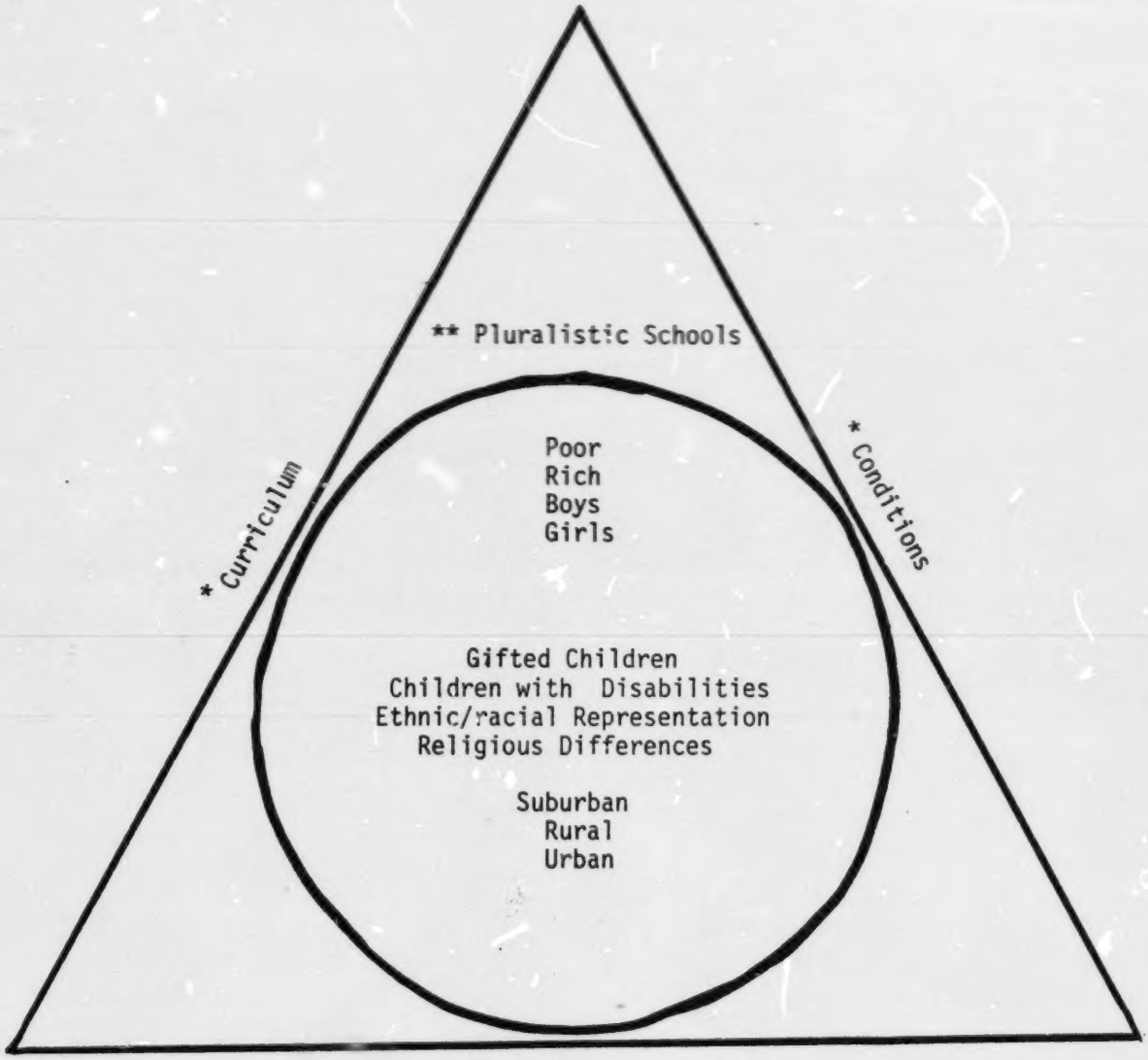
by Amos, Jones, Williams and Brooks, (1980). Hewett's original conception identified the three dimensions crucial to effective teaching and successful learning: (1) the curriculum, consisting of instructional tasks, activities and assignments; (2) conditions, involving the circumstances and criteria established for successful attainment of the curriculum; and (3) consequences, referring to the motivational factors and incentives employed to give the greatest probability that the instructional tasks will be accomplished under the specified conditions.

With the inclusion of many diverse learners within Hewett's triangle, each leg must be adjusted to individual uniqueness. A key thrust for the WSU teacher education programs is to sensitize the teacher to the ways that backgrounds, experiences, and needs of the learners influence the three legs of the Learning Triangle.

The Learning Triangle

Hewett, Frank M. and Steven R. Forness. Education of Exceptional Learners, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1977, p. 374. (By permission of Dr. Frank Hewett.)

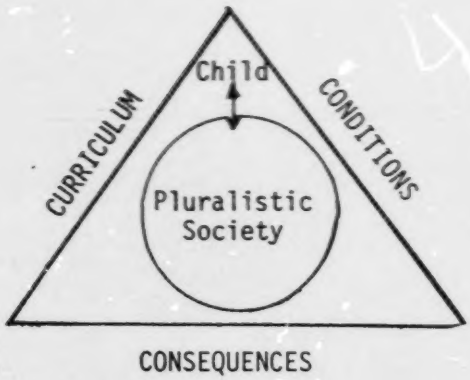
HEWETT'S LEARNING TRIANGLE
as elaborated by Amos, et. al.:



* Learning Triangle -- Hewett
**Pluralistic Circle -- Amos

* HEWETT'S LEARNING TRIANGLE

AS ELABORATED BY AMOS, ET. AL.



QUESTIONS WHICH FLOW FROM THE LEARNING TRIANGLE

1. WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES WHICH WOULD AFFECT SCHOOL PERFORMANCE?
   - A. CONDITIONS OF BIRTH?
   - B. ENVIRONMENT - FAMILY, COMMUNITY?
   - C. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS?
   - D. WHY THE DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF MINORITIES IN SPECIAL CLASSES?

2. HOW CAN/SHOULD THE CURRICULUM BE ADJUSTED, ADAPTED, INDIVIDUALIZED?
   - A. WHAT TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS ARE NEEDED?
   - B. ARE MINORITIES REPRESENTED IN TEXTS, AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS?

3. ARE THE CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING HUMANISTIC, FAIR ETC. ?
   A. WHAT SYSTEMS OF MANAGEMENT OF BEHAVIOR ARE UTILIZED ?
   B. DO CHILDREN AND PARENTS HAVE "IN PUT" INTO POLICY, RULES ?
   C. IS THERE AN ATTITUDE OF INCLUSION RATHER THAN EXCLUSION ?

4. DOES EVERYONE HAVE A FAIR CHANCE TO BECOME?
   A. TESTS/ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION: IS THE SYSTEM NON-BIASED, MULTIFACTORED ?
   B. IS THE REWARD SYSTEM FAIR - COMPATIBLE WITH ETHNIC GROUPS ?
   C. IS COMPETITION OVER-STRESSED ?
   D. ARE LABELS USED TO DECIDE INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES, RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL NEEDS ?

During the introductory and reinforcement phases of teacher education, some of the questions raised above are initially addressed. Regardless of chosen majors, all students complete modules which cover:

1. Mainstreaming (LRE)
2. Meeting Individual Needs
3. Classroom Management
4. Teaching in a Multicultural/Pluralistic Society

The specific objectives and enabling activities in the introductory module "Teaching in a Multicultural/Pluralistic Society" at Wright State University are designed to help prospective educational personnel to:

1. evaluate their own beliefs and attitudes towards others;
2. review concepts about different cultural, ethnic, religious and economic groups;
3. recognize prejudice, scapegoating, and discrimination in their own behavior and behaviors of others;
4. become aware of as well as to use helping behaviors;
5. develop skills in active listening;
6. use empathy in relationships with learners;
7. recognize controversial issues and be able to recognize positions on issues;
8. research ideas about ethnic, cultural, religious and economic groups; and
9. synthesize and evaluate knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed from objectives and activities presented in the module.

Special educators in our multicultural/pluralistic society must view themselves as "movers" and "shakers" in developing multicultural/pluralistic teacher education programs. By profession, special educators are trained to value differences, to individualize, and to recognize special attributes and needs. The 1980s should see new movements of special educators advocating for quality MC/P teacher education programs.

James Banks (1979) has presented probably the most significant rationale for developing teacher education programs which help teachers to value and respect the diversity and difference in the world community. He has stated:

> The current school curriculum is not preparing most youths to function within a world community of the future. Many students grow up in middle

> class Anglo American communities and attend all white middle class schools. Their world is very different from the world society in which they will be required to function in the future. The white race is a world minority. Five out of six persons in the world are non-white. The vast majority of the world's population is non-christian. Because the birth rate of non-whites greatly exceeds that of whites, white christians will be an even smaller world minority by the year 2000. The school should present students from all racial, ethnic, and social class groups with cultural and ethnic alternatives, and teach them to live in a world society that is ethnically and racially diverse. Students must be helped to develop the vision and commitment needed to make our world more humane.

If our children are to learn to live and work in a multicultural/pluralistic society, our teachers--special and regular--must be trained to teach in multicultural/pluralistic learning environments.

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